

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of Application No. 09/538,934, filed March 31, 2000, now US Patent No. 6,592,457

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates generally to games of chance and, more particularly, to a system and method for storing the status of a paused game of chance at a central database linked to and remote from a gaming machine.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money at the machine and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options. Where the available gaming options include a number of competing machines and the expectation of winning on
15 each machine is roughly the same (or believed to be the same), players are most likely to be attracted to the most entertaining and exciting of the machines. Shrewd operators consequently strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines available because such machines attract frequent play and hence increase profitability to the operators. Traditional gaming machines use mechanical slot reels or video
20 depictions of such reels to display games and outcomes to players. Further, many traditional gaming machines use simulations of standard casino games such as cards, dice, bingo and the like to attract players. These traditional machines may become repetitive over time, and it is believed that more innovative displays and gameplay features will find success by offering players an interesting and exciting alternative to
25 traditional games. Accordingly, in the competitive gaming machine industry, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to produce new types of games, or enhancements to existing games, which will attract frequent play by enhancing the entertainment value and excitement associated with the game. In particular, there is a need for engaging and entertaining games that can hold a player's interest more than
30 existing games. The present invention is directed to satisfying this need.